


REFORM JUDAISM AND ZIONISM

An Examination of Dr. David Philipson's
Thesis That They Are Irreconcilable

By MAX SCHLOESSINGER



BALTIMORE
REPRINTED FROM JEWISH COMMENT
JANUARY 4-11, 1907



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

Reform Judaism and Zionism

man loves to think in antitheses. Heaven and earth, light and darkness, truth and falsehood, are old dualisms. For my part, I shall choose "yes and no" as contrasts. "Yes" seems to me a friendly, cordial word; "no," a ugly word. There is a sacred *yes* of the firmly determined strength, the *yes* that creates and builds; and there is a wretched *no*, the *no* of obstinacy, the *no* that, not giving itself what it wishes, only destroys what others have secured through creation and construction. Government and anarchy illustrate the contrast. There is, however, also a wretched *yes*, the *yes* of sheer mental laziness, the *yes* of habit and custom, the *yes* that does not comprehend anything that is new or trembles before it, and there is a sacred *no*, the *no* that is in reality the expression of a powerful desire for healing and salvation" (Nietzsche), the *no* that is born of a longing for truth, that opposes the present in order to bring about the future. Bureaucracy and freedom are instances of this contrast. Bureaucracy must fight for its life. It has a constitution that suits it, and to this it remains loyal to the very letter. In the name of security and progress it clings to old paragraphs of the law, and

thereby casts suspicion upon the rightfulness of all opposition. The freeing of peoples is conscience transformed into action. It makes an end of the old routine. It overthrows the idols because it seeks out God. It is not willing to be restrained and deluded through considerations of worldly wisdom. For the truth has revealed itself to it as an inexorable demand, and that admits of no delay—"Do not hold us back; we must do or die."

A sacred *no* of freedom is Zionism; its adversary, the wretched *yes* of the bureaucratic regime, is an antiquated wing of American Reform Judaism. In its name my colleague, Dr. David Philipson, has recently taken the floor (in a sermon published in the *American Israelite* and other papers). He has excommunicated Zionism as "absolutely incompatible and irreconcilable with Reform Judaism." Zionism is forcing its way. Many a rabbi becomes a convert. Import Reform pulpits in the country are being filled by Zionists. In his own congregation there are Zionists. Under these circumstances the ban of excommunication is the weapon of last resort. Reform Judaism and Zionism are absolutely incompatible and irreconcilable! Dr. Philipson still owes us some proof for this thesis. Indeed,

he summons the canonical reformers as witnesses, for "one of the first practical results of the agitations for reform was the elimination from the traditional liturgy of all prayers for the return to Palestine, the reinstitution of the Jewish State and the re-establishment of the throne of David." Remarkable achievement! Moreover, he appeals to "the famous Pittsburg Rabbinical Conference," at which, together with the Jewish nation and the Abrahamic rite, the rebuilding of the Jewish State was buried once and for all time, for, as they held, the Messianic hopes of Israel had already found their fulfilment in the present.

That was in the year 1885. Meanwhile, Israel has had a wealth of opportunity to taste the bloody joy of this Messianic time to the full, the position of the whole world has been shifted, and with it the situation of the Jewish people. It has been in a state of ferment and the people have awakened. New movements have arisen, and every thoughtful Jew has been led to revise his opinions through the history of so active a period. Not so Dr. Philipson. And if the whole world round about him were to fall in pieces, he alone would still remain immovable as a *rocher de bronze*, and would cite the "resolutions" of the famous Pittsburg Conference, the canonical Reformers and the rabbinical conferences having solved and settled all questions of Judaism for all time. If new complications arise, then we have simply to

look up the church fathers and decrees of the church councils there find the answer. You have the constitution which suits you and comfortably cite its sections and clauses. These relieve the Epigoni of every movement of the necessity of independent thinking and of taking individual attitudes toward new problems. They can avail themselves of their dogmatic *Shuhan Aruk*, with which they can thumb right and left. Of course that does not keep one from calling himself "progressive," if the word happens to be part of the phraseology of the party. Likewise it does not prevent him from attempting to create the impression of independent thinking and close grappling with the new problem by using such rhetorical phrases as "Let us have courage then, with all attempts at defending the thesis of the possibility of reconciliation, the attitude of Reform Judaism and Zionism."

It would be only reasonable to expect that one who throws down the gauntlet for an historically impossible party should be thoroughly acquainted with the opposing movement. This, however, is not the case. Dr. Philipson identifies Jewish nationalism with political nationalism with Zionism, though these two movements in theory as well as in practice are distinct and separate. For it is plain that Jewish political nationalism strives to a recognition of the Jewish nation along with the other nationalities of the State, as we may see today

own eyes in Russia and Austria. Zionism may sympathize with this national political endeavor, but it identifies itself with it in no wise. The Jewish nationalists of these States may be more Zionistic than the Poles in Poland or the Finns and Ruthenians in Russia, who are likewise striving for national rights. The Jewish Bund until recently the nationalistic organization of the Jewish laborers in Poland, on Social-democratic principles. Nevertheless, the attitude of the Bund toward Zionism was very hostile because of the bourgeois tone of Socialism and its indifference toward the Jewish question.

Jewish nationalism and the Zionism which is in vogue may be declared to be synonymous with about as much reason as "political" may be considered a verbal antonym of "spiritual." Dr. Philipson says: "Reform Judaism is spiritual, Zionism is political," and he declares that the elimination of nationalistic hopes from the prayer-book indicated "a substitution of the purely spiritual for the political mission." I have looked the matter up in several English dictionaries in order to find some justification or explanation of this contrasting of "spiritual" and "political." As a matter of fact, they are only these two concepts not mutually exclusive, but, on the contrary, they include each other in so far as every truly great and epoch-making social movement takes its rise in an inspiring thought, in a ruling principle, in some spirit that takes hold

of the people; in other words, is spiritual in the highest sense. But I, too, have my church fathers whom I consult whenever theological problems vex me. I open the venerable *Totengespräche* of Fritz Mauthner (Berlin, 1906), and find on page 39 this dogma: "*Was einmal theologisch war, kann niemals wieder logisch werden.*"

Dr. Philipson feels so confident of the force of his argument that even the first Reformers eliminated all prayers for the return to Palestine, the reinstituting of the Jewish state and the restoration of the throne of David from the prayer-book, that as a consequence he assumes it as impossible for a Reform Jew to embrace Zionism. On the other hand, I wish to remind Dr. Philipson of the fact that the first Reformers eliminated these national allusions from the prayer-book, not out of opposition to Zionism, for such a thing was not then in existence, but out of opposition to the mediaeval Messianism, according to which the Messiah, a sprout from the stock of David, would lead the Jews from all the corners of the world, with the aid of miracles, to Jerusalem, there to rebuild the Temple and reinstitute the sacrificial cult. Zionism, however, has absolutely nothing to do with this mediaeval Messianism, and the differences between Zionism and Messianism have often been pointed out by the Zionists themselves. Indeed, in one sense it is even necessary for Zionism to be opposed to the mediaeval Messianism in

so far as its fundamental belief—that we have to bear a punishment visited upon us by God and that our political restoration will be brought about by the Almighty Himself after we have done penance for our guilt—is supposed to relieve us of every care about our national freedom, our unity and independence. The individual Zionist may pray whatsoever he will and howsoever he will, for Zionism permits everyone to be happy in his own way. But at no time has Zionism recognized the prayer for the advent of the Messiah as an official means for the acquisition of Palestine or for any other end, nor has it ever declared itself in favor of the crowning of a Davidide or the restoration of the sacrificial cult and of similar ideas. Just as the first Reformers eliminated mediaeval Messianism from their Prayer-book, so have the Zionists eliminated it as a *political* factor from their movement. From this it appears that one may be an anti-Messianist Reformer, and, at the same time, an anti-Messianist Zionist, a fact which has evidently not yet become clear to Dr. Philipson, else he would never have called the canonical Reformers and the “famous Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference” into the contest.

My anti-Zionist friend has, moreover, a whole row of striking antitheses: “Reform Judaism is universal, Zionism is oriental. Reform Judaism looks to the future, Zionism to the past; the outlook of Reform Judaism is the world, the outlook of Zionism is

a corner of Western Asia.” For who delves beneath the surface all is empty sound, mere chaff that already been threshed over a thousand times, and which I haven’t the least desire to thresh over again. I shall suggest one topic for rumination. If exalting and ennobling must the end be on the well-fed, comfortable, self-satisfied Philistine in the pew when his steward keeper assures him for the hundred time that *he* is spiritual, *he* is the universalist, to whom the future, the whole world belongs by right; the embodiment of the ideals of Judaism which the Zionists have surrendered!

But I shall leave this unfruitful *polémique* and rather examine the relation of both Reform and Zionism to Judaism as it appears to me. I hope to trust that I may come to some understanding on this question with some of my Reform friends who do not imagine that the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference has uttered the last word on the Jewish question, and who are willing to have neither their rights nor their duty to think for themselves usurped by their grandfathers or great-grandfathers.

I must, however, state in advance that since Reform is an internal movement that concerns Judaism and the condition of the Jew, I must oppose over against it only the corresponding cultural side of Zionism. Thus we here leaving entirely out of consideration the economic, political, patriotic and other sides of Zionism.

se are quite incommensurable with the purely spiritual movement of Jewish Reform.

The spirit of modern times came to the ghetto, not slowly and gradually, so that the inhabitants could have time to adapt themselves to their new environment and to rescue their individuality, unbroken and pure, out of the confusion. "Like a deluge a new era broke out over them, ridding away every structure, everything essentially Jewish." From withered friends, the Christian advocates of emancipation, the principles of which had already been present in the French Revolution, urging the self-emancipation of the Jews, that is, as they understood it, self-emancipation from all those "peculiarities" that had up to that time stood in the way of their closer association with the Christians, and insisting that "without improving and refining the Jewish ritual" no emancipation could be granted. But at this critical period of transition there was a dearth of great, powerful personalities that could have directed the stream into the right direction. With the intense desire for education that Jews more than others feel, they madly rushed upon the civilization that opened to them. They understood well that modern education would admit of no combination with the old Judaism of the ghetto. They did not proceed quietly and thoughtfully to a work of modification, so that in the course of centuries a synthesis of the Judaism and European civilization

would gradually grow up—no, *that* had to be created artificially, as if by magic, in the course of a few decades. An uncontrollable desire for freedom had been kindled. Not only the ghetto, no, the whole of the narrowing Middle Ages had to be laid low; all boundaries had to be torn down, not only between classes and ranks, no, between nations and peoples; from the land of slavery into the heart of Christian freedom, into the civilization of Europe!

Among the manifold institutions of modern civilization there was, however, one against which the Jews have struggled with all their might—the Christian Church. Not only were they unable to accept its dogmas, but they also felt themselves instinctively repelled by it as the hotbed of mediaeval Jew-hatred. Every blessing and curse of modern civilization they were ready and willing to purchase at the expense of the entire spiritual heritage of the ghetto—but not entrance into the Christian Church. Thus, if only for this reason, it was essential that the Synagogue should be preserved as a counter-institution against the Church. At the same time, the synagogue was the only form of spiritual distinctness for which there was room in modern life. Of a state composed of a number of nationalities, permitting of an independent development of the *culture* of each, of course nothing was known before the second half of the nineteenth century. Then, at the time and in the countries of Jewish emancipation, there was only one national state with a homogeneous na-

tional *culture*. The heterogeneity of separate groups in the state could manifest itself only in the sphere of religion, thanks to the general guarantee of religious freedom dating from the Peace of Westphalia. In like manner the Jews could be included in the body-politic only as a religious community with the right of religious freedom.

Thus once more, as so often in the past, the course of Jewish history was determined, not by the Jews, but by their non-Jewish environment. All the spiritual heritage of the ghetto—law, language, literature, national consciousness and national hopes—was thus merged into the “religion.” It remained the only avenue of expression of the Jewish consciousness for emancipated Jewry. This was the last great shrinking process that time-honored Judaism experienced, a very considerable letting of blood as the price of its political emancipation and its entrance into the civilization of Christian Europe.

But even this religion did not emerge intact from the general deluge. It, too, unmistakably bears the mark of emancipation. For a long time it had to wade deep through the waters of Christian civilization before it could save itself by a hair's breadth on the farther bank. When the call for assembling sounded there the movement “away from Judaism” had already wrought havoc. “The Jews and the Judaism that we wished to reconstruct are torn to shreds and are the prey of barbarians, fools, money-

changers, idiots and *parnasim*. Many a sun will set over this generation and find it just as it is to-day—shattered, drifting away into the Christian *Notreligion*—without stamina or principle, partly in the old muck, thrashed aside by Europe, still vegetating—with dry eyes gazing out eagerly for the ass of the Messiah or some other ‘longears’—partly thumbing state papers or the dictionary; now wealthy now bankrupt, now oppressed, now tolerated. Their own science is despised among the German Jews.” Thus commented Zunz in 1823.

But where the refined, sensitive nature of a Zunz felt disgusted and repelled and forced to seek refuge in itself, some sturdier natures set themselves to the task of rescuing whatever still remained to be rescued of Jewish consciousness. Their philosophy was opportunism; their method compromise. They sanctioned prevailing devastation and exalted empty, boastful “Zeitbewusstsein” in the place of a philosophical principle. These men were the Reformers of Judaism. They were men of practical wisdom. They stemmed the tide of religious anarchy and the falling away from Judaism, not by means of a powerful idea, not through a towering personality, but by means of an organization, the Reform Synagogue. On this alone rests their claim to immortality in Jewish history; in this alone lies the constructive value of their work constructive.

Their own Jewish consciousness was already chilled to the bone. The

ionalism of the Mendelssohnian period had congealed the warm spring of the mystic element in Judaism. They wanted to understand all things; they wanted everything explained. Of the mystic growth and development in the realm of the emotions where, far from the light of the sun, religious experiences are born, they had no conception. Their catchword was "enlightenment" (*Aufklärung*), their ethics were the ethics of Christian Europe, their theology the ideals of the French Revolution, their religious aesthetics the aesthetics of Protestantism, their religious-philosophical principle, the *Zeitbewusstsein*, their ultimate aim to be absorbed in a sacred humanity. They were men of the *Sturm und Drang*, and still, properly speaking, not free men, for there still trembled in their soul the dread of the rod of the Christian taskmaster, whose disapproval was to be avoided even by the emancipated.

Just think of the irony of history! These men, into whose very bones the Christianity of Europe had penetrated, were to be the saviours and upbuilders of modern Judaism! Let us examine their work as it has been evolved most fully and freely in America. The doing away with the obligatory force of the Law, the elimination of the hope of Zion and of the prayer for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem from the liturgy, the attempt to put an end to the Abrahamic rite in the case of proselytes, as well as the claim of being the only true and pure continua-

tion of the original prophetic Judaism, belong just as truly to the history of the Reformed Synagogue as to that of the old Christian Church. For it was just these points in which in the second century after Christ the separation of Christianity from the old Judaism manifested itself, as may be learned from Joel's *Blicke in die Religionsgeschichte* (Part II). The exclusive recognition of the Bible as the source of religious authority and the rejection of Oral tradition, as well as the employment of the vernacular in the service in place of Hebrew, have their exact counterparts in the Lutheran Protestant Reformation in Christianity. Yes, the very concept of a Reform which holds itself entitled to eliminate such essentials as the Law (*Halakah*) or the entire oral Tradition from the religious system without substituting anything in its place is copied from Protestantism. For in Judaism, up to that time, there had been only individual reforms, i. e. the same reality could be given a new form for the purpose of conserving it if the old form no longer amply represented it, as e. g. the Pharisaic substitution of a fine for corporal punishment in "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Other matters, such as removing the hat at prayer, the use of the organ and the mixed choir, etc., might be mentioned in order to show that Reform Judaism in its adaptation to Christianity in the nineteenth century has had to go through the same stages of development in religious life

as Christianity in an earlier period in its adaptation to paganism.

And the result of this adaptation—a Judaism without backbone or substance; with its old doctrines thrown into a corner for the rats and the bats, and with a few general humanitarian ideals—the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, justice, righteousness, peace and other ideals given as the total content of Judaism—ideals which naturally flourish in a very highly developed form in Jewish consciousness, but still neither exhaust the doctrinal content of Judaism nor distinguish Judaism from Christianity or Islam in any way, for these ideals are common to all three; its ethics as they are practiced in no way distinguished from Christian ethics if we overlook the purely theoretic whim of Christian self-abnegation and non-resistance; its ritual absolutely eliminated from daily life, or, rather, contracted into the Sabbath and festival liturgy of the synagogal service, which in itself bears the unmistakable imprint of Christian influence on its forehead—in the elimination of Hebrew and of the congregational prayer, in the introduction of the organ and the mixed choir, in removing the hat, in the seating together of men and women and in the Sunday services, etc.

This, then, is the condition of the bulwark which Jewish consciousness has erected for itself in the Synagogue against the Christianity of the Church, and behind which it desired to preserve its identity. But with what ter-

rible force the enemy has inflicted breaches here! The hill upon which this bulwark was constructed has been gradually sinking lower and lower while one layer after the other has slid down into the depths, so that the hill is no longer noticeably higher than its surroundings. In other words, life is removing the point of the old contrast between Christianity and Judaism and is still continuing the leveling process. The Church itself, under the influence of European civilization, is suffering a constant revision of its doctrines, a fact which naturally must bring it about that the Church will constantly seem less and less repulsive to the Jews.

Moreover, the Church is not the only—and in the twentieth century perhaps not even the strongest—medium through which Christianity permeates the lives of nations. Let us not forget that the whole of modern civilization, yea, even the modern State, is an offshoot of Christianity. In America also public life, by virtue of unwritten customs which permit of no regulation through constitutions, is Christian, a fact which leads to ever-increasing conflicts with school boards and courts of law. Through every imaginable chink and gap Christianity forces itself upon our consciousness—the press, literature, the theater, art, music, the public schools, social intercourse, business life, with its legal or conventional Sundays and holidays—all help to reconcile us inwardly with Christianity and to hollow out more and more

our Jewish consciousness. We live the life of our non-Jewish neighbors, rest on their rest days, speak their language, read their literature, sing their songs and enjoy their art, until at last the content of our consciousness differs from theirs in no respect, and the question is forced upon us, "Why am I a Jew?"—a question which in itself is already a herald of approaching death, and one which spreads a foul odor very offensive to refined natures.

"Why am I a Jew?" What makes me spiritually a Jew? The answer must be: The protest against, or the negation of, Christianity. Upon this protest the Reform Synagogue is built. In it, the positive—is negative!

It lives on contradiction and with this must die, and that so much the quicker because our own opposition in the case of our ever-progressing adaptation to Christianity in church and culture is weakening daily. For the Reform, like all the earlier movements in Judaism, is lacking in self-determination. The day of its official death will be set by Christianity, and, indeed, it will be that day when Christianity is ready to correct a mathematical error of long standing, and, in general, to set back its doctrines, which had been exalted to *Halakah*, to the position which they originally occupied, namely, that of free, unbinding *Haggadah*. Modern Reform Judaism is approaching with gigantic strides the form of existence

which the Talmud (Sanh. 52a, 92a) ascribes to the sons of Aaron, who brought strange fire upon the altar of God: "Serefat neshamah we-guf kayyan"—their soul consumed, only a lifeless clod remaining.

"Ghetto or world-culture," that has so far been the tragic alternative of Jewish history. In the ghetto—class legislation, economic ruin and spiritual stagnation. In the civilization of the world—material welfare, legal equality, but spiritual submission in the great sea of Christianity. From the day that the broad rational liberalism of a Lessing, a Dohm, a Montesquieu and a Mirabeau burst the gates of the ghetto until this very hour this de-Judaizing stream has been flowing without ever ceasing. It has its source and its fount in the great ghettos of Eastern Europe, and it flows into the broad sea of the Christian civilization of Western Europe. This movement—"away from the ghetto"—has been forced upon the Jews through industrial competition, which renders an inner coalescence with the surrounding civilization imperative. It corresponds at the same time with the peculiar inner struggle of the Jews for more light, for a more highly-developed form of life than that of the ghetto. But in every case so far it has been Judaism that had to pay the forfeit in this struggle "from the Ghetto to Culture;" in every case it is the general civilization of our non-

Jewish surroundings that has threatened to become the natural grave of the spirit of the Jewish people.

But still here, too, there is a powerful, a sacred *no!* The spirit of the people utters it, precisely because it is not willing to die. The spirit of the people utters it because it cannot die. Wonderful and unfathomable is the working of the spirit of a people. Slowly and timidly it makes itself felt at first, here by a youth and there by an old man, revealing itself in an inexorable demand which does not permit them to rest. When once such an eternal word has found a place in their souls they must proclaim it in order to free themselves of the burden within, and their word finds attentive ears and warm hearts here and there, for their word is truth. Then a feeling of relief spreads throughout the world, while among all the bent backs here and there one more straightens out, and there arise men of the sacred *no*, determined to depart from the old rut in order to proceed to a better future.

Thus works the spirit of the Jewish people, too; it cannot, it will not, die. For it is not of this world. Like Prometheus, it is an offspring of the oldest race of the gods cast aside by Jupiter, the earth-born son of Uranus and his generation of gods. Like Prometheus, who stole fire from Heaven for man, it has been chained for many decades to a rock overlooking an abyss. But, like Prometheus, it breaks its bonds

and is seized by a wild desire for action, a joy in work and an indomitable defiance for Zeus and his generation.

Wähntest du etwa,
Ich sollte das Leben hassen,
In Wüsten fliehen,
Weil nicht alle
Blüthenträume reifen?

Hier sitz ich, forme Menschen
Nach meinem Bilde,
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,
Zu leiden, zu weinen,
Zu geniessen und zu freuen sich,
Und dein nicht zu achten,
Wie ich!

—Goethe: *Prometheus*.

In plain prose, What do we want? No more nor less than the regeneration of the Jewish Spirit on its native soil. We wish to create in Palestine a national spiritual center—"a center near and dear to the whole people, uniting and combining it; a center of learning and of knowledge, of language and literature, of purification of body and soul; a true miniature of Israel as it should be" (Ahad Ha-am). For this we are creating the preliminary accessories. We wish to bring Palestine under Jewish influence and into the possession of Jews through agricultural, commercial and technical operations. Along with this we wish to create every possible modern educational opportunity—public schools, high schools, technical and agricultural schools, schools of art and music, libraries and museums, etc.—

and wish thereby to furnish to a spiritually and physically healthy Jewish population a free opportunity for self-development. In this way it may, nay, as we believe, it *will*, come to pass that this young Israel will create a new spiritual center in Palestine through which, at the same time, the spiritual regeneration of the whole *diaspora* may be assured, for *there* would the whole of life, in all its expressions, be purely Jewish. Jewish spirit would be free to live in school and at home, in public life and in private affairs, and would no more allow itself to be artificially limited in space to the synagogue, in time to two hours a week on Saturday or Sunday morning, and be content to a few general human and ethico-religious ideals. Once more would Prometheus *Unbound* be able to wrest fire from Heaven and become the benefactor of mankind. *There* it could be granted the Jewish spirit to accomplish great things in art and science, in trade and industry, for the honor and glory of the nation, for the good and welfare of humanity.

Here there could also be friendly intercourse on a basis of equality between Judaism and the civilization of the world, and the old antagonism between Jewish and general culture, which thus far has always ended in a one-sided compromise at the expense of the former, would give place to a new, a thorough synthesis, in which a real exchange of spiritual and material products between Israel and the world could take place. Then would Israel

sit in the spiritual council of civilized nations, not merely as one with *equal* rights, but as one with *full* rights. The question of the right of the Jewish people to exist will cease to be on the day when they begin producing as a people instead of living as parasites or stagnating.

Of course we can create only the preliminary conditions necessary for all this. In what direction the spirit of the Jew will develop in the future no one but professional theologians can know in advance. The task of taking the necessary preliminary steps, such as buying land, getting charters for industrial enterprises and establishing schools, falls naturally to the lot of Political Zionism without which the cultural side could never accomplish its purpose. To contrast political Zionism with cultural or moral Zionism as separate things and for one to declare that he is antagonistic only to the first but not to the other, is, therefore, mere hair-splitting, requiring no further discussion.

The endeavor to bring about a Jewish renaissance in Palestine will, in turn, breathe a spirit into the dry bones of western Judaism, and it shall live. Above all, it will give the body of the Jewish people, so long tossed about, the sport of the waves, on the sea of history, a compass at last, a common idea, a sacred task.

We may easily understand that the older reformers are hostile to Zionism, for, according to their opinion, the Jewish spirit has already reached its high-

est development in Reform Judaism. They have already interpreted everything to themselves so nicely—our dispersion as an act of Divine favor and providence, the fading of our spirit as universalism, the denial of our national tradition as progress, our adaptability as originality, our helpless appeal to eternal justice as a mission, our massacres as the birth-pangs of the Messianic era, our absorption into Christianity a conquest of the world. And now comes Zionism, turning everything topsy-turvy. In the powerless protest of these men the spiritual accumulation of a dying generation is

struggling against the onslaught of a new era.

History knows no going backwards. Zionism cannot eliminate the Reform period from Jewish history. Zionism must come to an understanding with Reform. This has already been accomplished in Europe. In America we are in the midst of the conflict. The outcome cannot be doubtful even here. True, the new unity which will spring from the contest of these historical forces will appear greatly modified. But this much is clear to the younger generation of both camps even now—Reform Judaism “will be *Zionistic* or it will *not be at all*.”